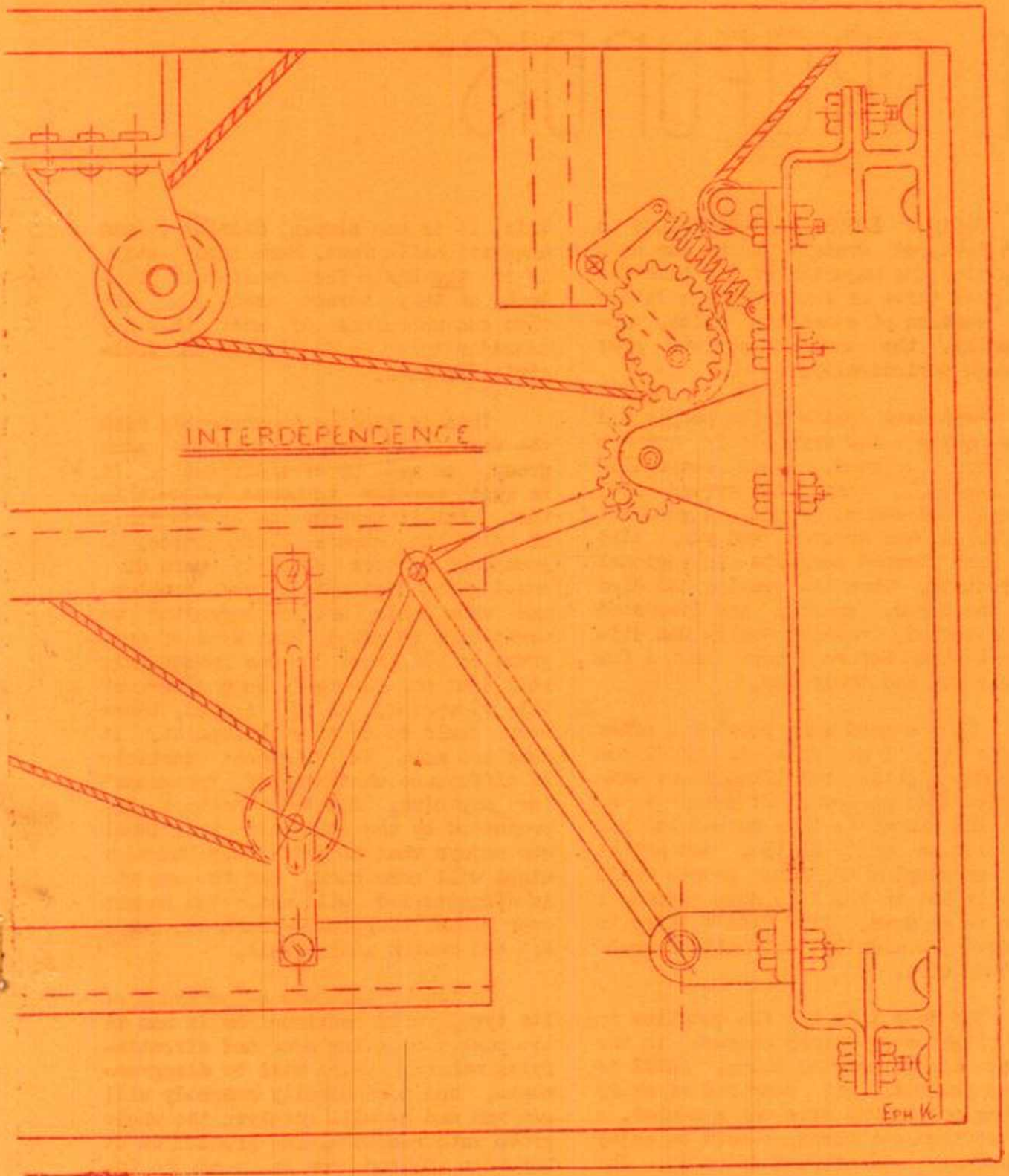
SHANGRI-LA



SIGNARCH 1952

NUMBER 31 ~ THE SOBER

DE PROFUNDIS

Tonight LASFS will continue a most involved wrangle which has been occupying the majority of its time for the past three or four weeks, a latter day version of something which, apparently, the ancient society goes through periodically.

Last week quite a few people had fun; quite a few were bored; quite a few were disgusted. These respective feelings cut completely across age, social, and sexual groups. A good bit of feeling was aroused, and yet, like all such teapot tempests in regional microcosms, when the evening had died and the bored, amused, and disgusted had departed, nothing really was different than before except that a few people had had their say.

Like a good many people, I often wonder why I go down to LASFS on Thursday nights; but like these same people I do go down. It seems to me that the answer to this much-belabored question is quite simple, and not at all as complex as some people would make it out to be. I go down because I like to go down. If I didn't like to go down I wouldn't, and neither would anybody else.

Nor does this beg the question in the slightest; simply because in the final reality of the thing, LASFS is quite obviously not composed of every living person who ever was a member. A lot of them got tired, ceased to enjoy attending, and stopped doing so. The history of the group, like any such group, is one of changing membership. Regardless of the reason suggested for this, it is one simple, distinct, and unquestionable fact. More importantly, it is the basic fact which all overlook as they thrust about for the whys and wherefors of what they may consider to be a decline in the society's fortunes.

This is tied up inextricably with the fact that LASFS, like any such group, is made up of individuals. It is quite popular to avoid facing this fact, but it happens to be the basis of all the club's difficulties. A group of members recently were discussing the society's current problems and when this writer suggested we might each be asked, What kind of programs do you like? he was immediately told that no, we must keep clear of this viewpoint. As if, indeed, there ever could be another viewpoint. It does not make the slightest particle of difference what kind of "programs" (or anything, for that matter) are presented by the club, an individual who enjoys what he gets every Thursday night will come back, and the one who is dissatisfied will not. You cannot ever please everybody--thank the Lord! Not and remain individuals.

So LASFS, like any other group of its type, will continue as it has in the past, pleasing some and dissatisfying others. There will be disagreements, and periodically somebody will get mad and he will catalyze the whole group into reaction. The problem as it has been seized upon is by nature insoluble. Like all things, each tempest will pass, and so long as the miracle --as one prominent member referred to

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the sober side: ED M. CLINTON, JR.

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Forrest Ackerman in this connection— that holds together LASFS endures, the society will endure. And perhaps longer.

Being, like all the good friends whom I join each Thursday night, an individual, I too have opinions, ideas and feelings on these matters. I must confess that last Thursday I certainly was not bored, but that while I was largely amused I was seriously disgusted. Along with Frank Quattrocchi, I think a clearing of the air and a relieving of troubled chests is most desirable in any group such as ours. However, I am always annoyed with fiddle-faddle, which last Thursday was to a great extent, and consider wasted energy one of the costliest expenditures it is possible for human beings to indulge in. While various groups and individuals were having at it, I sought in vain to detect any concrete, positive, specific program.

I recommend as a good, solid program for moral reorientation:

1) Lay off Frank Quattrocchi. He has got hold of a very hot potato and is doing his sincerest best, regardless of what you as an individual may feel.

2) Stop backbiting. I like just about everybody in the group, and if I happen to have any particular antagonism I keep it to myself and personal— which is what it should be. If you don't like somebody, you are not going to change them or your feelings by letting it get you down. As a matter of fact, this one thing makes me fume sometimes, because I just cannot imagine why these pet hates keep cropping up. Maybe it's because, as one member remarked to me the other day, they don't have anything better to do.

3) Quit taking yourself so damned seriously. There are quite a lot of things touched on by the club that are really worth your serious attention, and these are the very things you keep yelling are neglected.

I recommend as a good, solid program of action to be taken:

1) A specific cut-off time for discussion of club business, subject to a provision for stopping-the-clock by a majority vote.

2) A specific delineation of duties for the Executive Committee, with no generalities.

3) Statement of and implementation of specific methods of improving the magazine, such as replacement or repair of duplicating machinery, contractual arrangements for lithoing, etc. Again, no generalities.

4) Prompt and immediate resumption, on an official basis, of activities which will make the club room worth renting,

or

Stop renting a club room.

5) Constitutional revision, specifically with an eye to simplification and clarification.

6) Less preoccupation with programs per se, more concern with landing what's available and specifically seeking to generate ideas from within the group.

7) I come to LASFS because I enjoy science fiction and am interested in it. What I find at LASFS should justify my attendance and membership on that basis.

I'm on the record, now. How about you?

Ed M Clinton

TOWARD THE SPACE AGE

ARTHUR LOUIS JOQUEL II

The history of rockets is usually begun with the development and recording of the "fire arrow" in China about 1232 A.D. While it is a long step both in time and space from the primitive Chinese rockets of the thirteenth century to the V-2 and the other giant missiles of the present decade, the principle behind them is the same.

Also, they have the same purpose --destruction in wartime. The rocket programs now being carried on at Point Magu, White Sands, Inyokern, Wallops Island, Panama River, and other testing sites have as their primary purpose the development of guided missiles for use if another world conflict breaks out.

In the shadow of the perennial preoccupation of military rocketeers with making their product as destructive as possible, the civilian rocket societies and individual experimenters have very often been pushed into the background. Existing almost entirely on the dues of their members, they have budgets in the hundreds of dollars instead of the millions allotted by the governments to their military projects.

Willy Ley and G. Edward Pendray in their books, have described the tribulations of German and American rocket experimenters. In the 1920's and early 1930's, before the advent of the Nazi regime in Germany and the depression in the United States, much valuable work was done on the basic principles of rocket flight and construction. But aside from the secret work of Dr. Robert H. Goddard in New Mexico, and the firing of a number of small mail-carrying rockets in various countries, civilian rocket research was almost dormant until 1944, when the renaissance began which has continued up to the present time.

But all through this trying period, the civilians were the ones who held fast to the dream--who maintained often in the fact of violent ridicule --that interplanetary travel was possible. People no longer laugh at those ideas--they now treat them with respect. But always the question is raised as to where the money is coming

from to build the space rocket. So far the answer is that either a big corporation or the government itself must build it. But the civilian rocket groups can claim credit for the vision and the dream—and for keeping the idea in the public eye and mind until it is now accepted as almost commonplace, to occur perhaps tomorrow and certainly very soon.

The Reaction Research Society and the Pacific Rocket Society, the two organizations with headquarters in Southern California, and with whose work I am most familiar, follow a definite pattern in the programs. All of the money possible is devoted to actual research—stand testing, rocket firing, photographing and analyzing results, building new motors and shells, then back to the beginning of the cycle.

Their public meetings, usually held in a library lecture room, are divided about equally between describing work just finished or in progress, and discussing the future of rocketry—rockets for meteorological surveys, for carrying mail, and, inevitably, rockets into space. But the practical work comes first. The RRS and the PRS are probably the most active civilian organizations of this type in the world.

While I had been interested in rockets since I was about eight or nine years old (I remember the first "Buck Rogers" strip ever printed), I did not join a rocket group until early in 1947, when I attended a meeting of the RRS in Glendale, California. On June 1 of that year I witnessed my first rocket testing.

The test area was on the edge of the Mojave Desert near Palmdale, and was chosen primarily for being flat, uninhabited for several square miles around, and accessible by a dirt road. On previous firings a site had been cleared for the launching rack and some foxholes dug for the photographers and ignition crew.

The first rocket fired, a five-foot parachute release test model, was a severe disappointment. The tracking flare failed to ignite, the parachute did not open properly, and the flight ended in a mass of metal, cloth, and cord half buried in the sand.

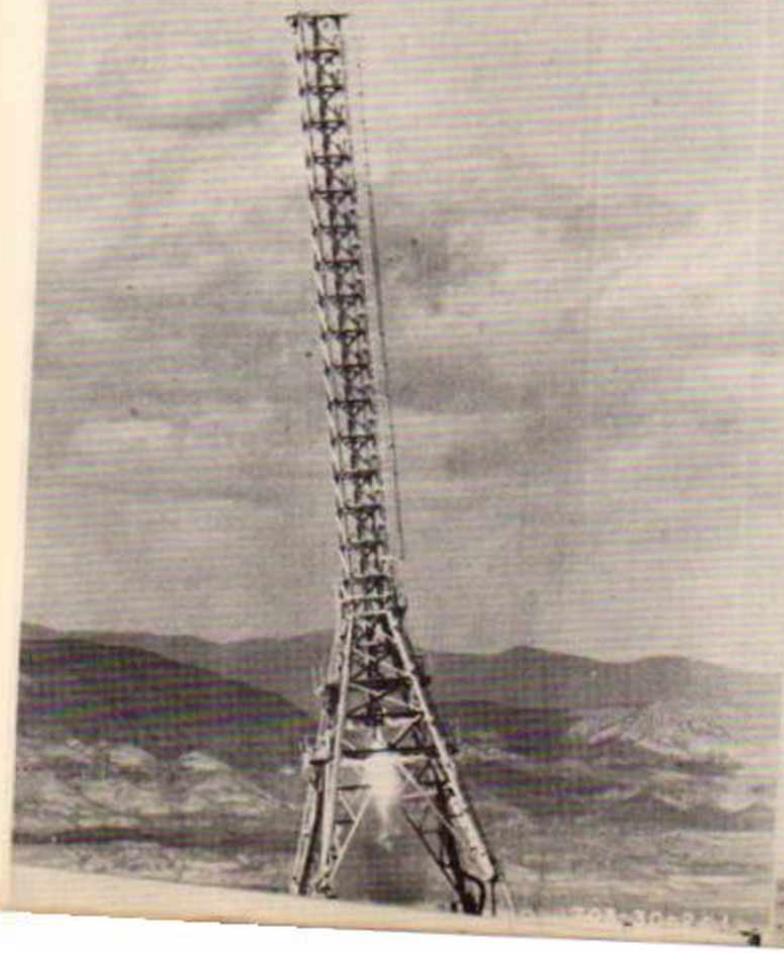
The second rocket was a slender fifteen-foot-long tube of steel and aluminum, using a micrograin powder developed by the society as a propellant. Painted red and yellow for better visibility, it towered several feet above the reach of the tallest crew member, even at the sixty degree angle at which it was fired. I believe this was the largest and most powerful non-professional rocket ever fired up to this time.

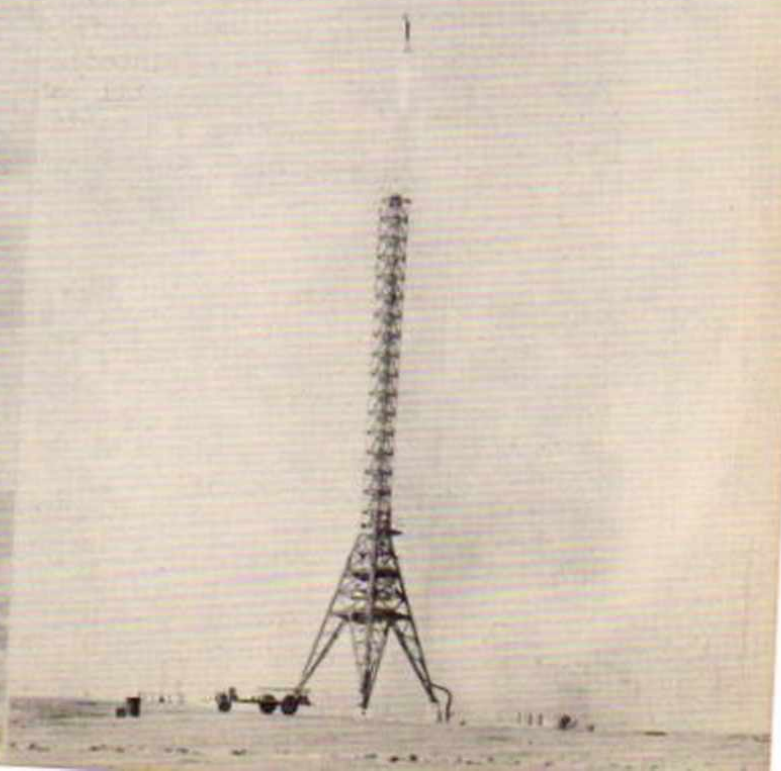
Finally the area was cleared, and a long blast from a signal horn announced one minute left before firing. I was using an 8-millimeter movie camera, and shared a pit with another photographer about a hundred yards back and almost at right angles to the line of flight.

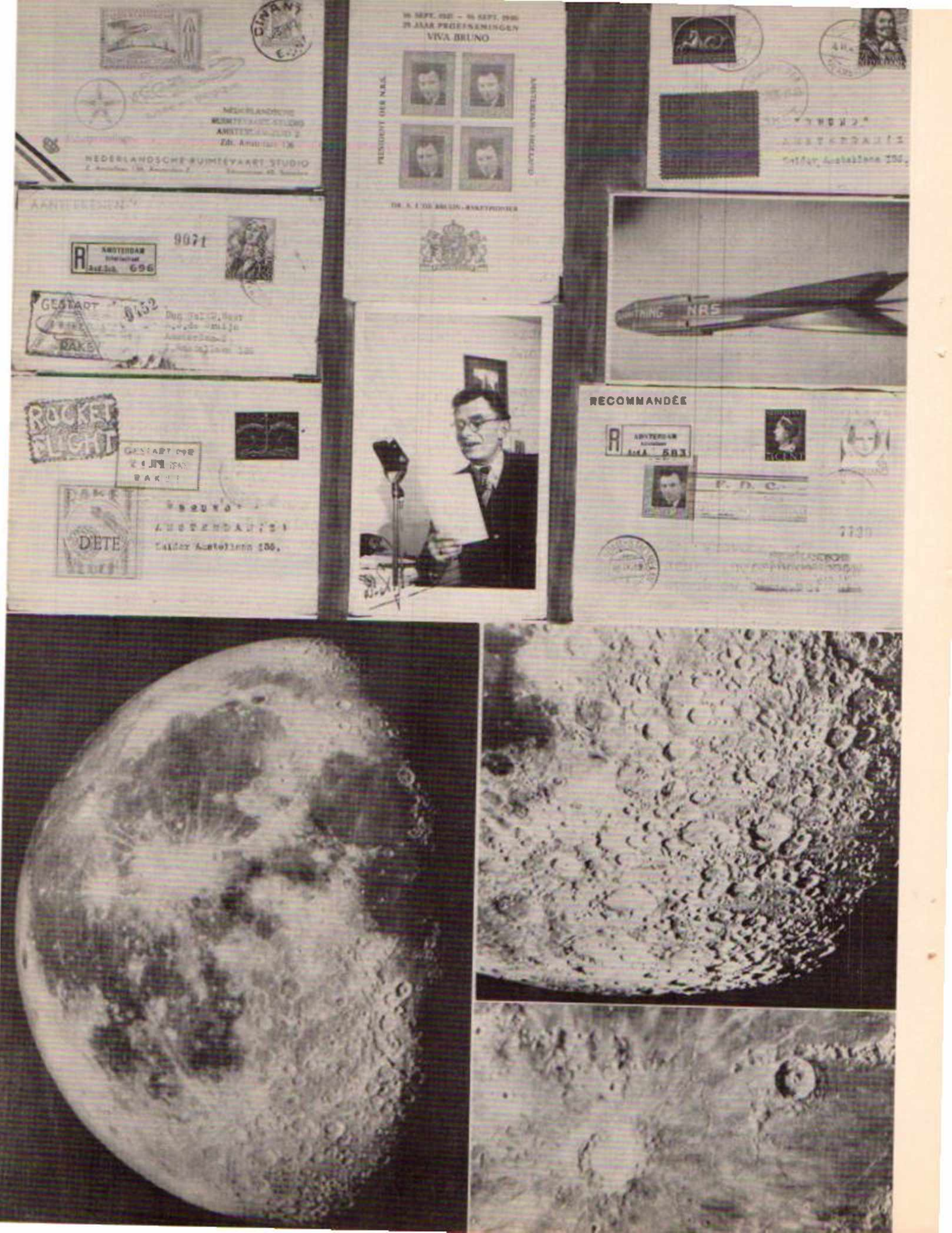
During that last minute, lots of things happen. You take a quick glance at the sun and hope that cloud doesn't get in the way, check the lens opening and springwind of your camera—you've already done it a dozen times before—inch down a little deeper in the foxhole and still try to have ample room to swing the camera and keep out of your partner's way.

A burst of white smoke from a pole near the ignition pit tells you: ten seconds to go. You get a chill down your spine, and at the same time concentrate on what you must do. There is no noise except the voice of the

(TOP, LEFT) The NATIV—North American Test Instrument Vehicle—is carried by special trailer to the launching tower. The NATIV is thirteen feet long and eighteen inches in diameter. (TOP, RIGHT) Raising the rocket into position for hoisting into the tower. (BOTTOM, LEFT) The liquid fuel motor of the NATIV has just been ignited. (BOTTOM, RIGHT) The rocket has just left the launching tower, to attain an altitude of approximately ten miles. Photographs are courtesy of North American Aviation, Inc.






NEDERLANDSCHE RUIMTEVAART STUDIO
25 JAAR PRESENTATIES
VIVA BRUNO
PRESIDENT DER N.R.S.
RECOMMANDÉE
ROCKET FLIGHT
PAKET
DETE
NRS

crew chief coming across to you, counting down the seconds—eight, seven, six—grip the camera a little tighter—five, four—press the button and hear the whir of film past the lens—three, two, one—FIRE!

There was a puff of smoke from the tracking flare in the nose of the rocket, a second's hesitation, and then, with a blast of orange flame and white smoke, the slim missile lifted into the blue of the desert sky with a roar like distant thunder.

I remember thinking, "How beautiful, how perfectly beautiful," and someone shouting in the distance, and the thin stream of smoke rising, rising, higher and farther, perfectly framed in the sights of my camera against the brilliant blue background. Finally it began to fall, and we lost track of it in the clouds near the horizon.

The recovery crew found it, in good condition, just before dark that evening. As we drove home, sunburned, tired, dusty, but with a feeling of major accomplishment well done, I decided that there was nothing to equal the significance and the excitement of rocket research.

Since that time, I have been on two mail rocket flights (a full story in themselves), the firing of a rocket which held the non-professional altitude record for some time, static tests of motors and flight tests of large and small rockets, and still have the same opinion.

The latest major accomplishment of the RRS is the successful firing of a liquid-propellant rocket powered by hydrogen peroxide. Fired from the largest civilian-constructed launching tower—forty feet in height—built by the Society at the Mojave test area of their friendly rivals, the PRS, where the two groups share facilities under a cooperative agreement, the rocket attained an estimated altitude of more than four miles and a flight distance of seven miles.

Some of the data used in the design of this rocket was derived from unclassified information made available by the military rocket research program of the United States, whose V-2, Viking, and smaller WAC Corporal and Aerobee, some roaring up to over 100 miles above the earth's surface, have immensely enlarged our knowledge of the conditions which surround our planet.

Cosmic ray counts, samples of rarified atmosphere, temperature recordings, and many other types of information are radioed back from these rockets—data which is essential to planning even the preliminary assaults upon outer space. If the civilian constructed rockets are being built to explore the distances up to twenty miles high, these larger missiles can be said to be the forerunners of tomorrow's spaceships.

The most outstanding progress toward the interplanetary rocket has been made by the firing of a two-step rocket which uses the V-2 as a booster and the WAC Corporal as the second step. Towering more than sixty feet in length, this combination was first fired early in 1949, sending the WAC soaring to an altitude of 250 miles at a speed of one and one-half miles per second, after the V-2 dropped off at 20 miles. Several subsequent flights have been made with the same arrangement, but the results have not been made public except for the announcement that they were "successful."

The top panel shows specimens of rocket mail flown in Holland by Dr. A. J. de Bruijn, who is pictured at the microphone of his short-wave station. He has conducted many rocket mail experiments during the past fifteen years, using rockets similar to that illustrated. Rocket mail has been flown in a dozen countries, seven flights having been held in the United States. From the author's collection.
Bottom panel shows, first, a photograph of the whole moon, aged 19 days, second, the vicinity of Tycho, and third, the crater of Copernicus. Photographs by Mt. Wilson Observatory.

Two hundred and fifty miles is only one one-thousandth the distance to the Moon--but the Moon is only a few more steps away. Willy Ley pointed out several years ago that the space rocket would be simple after smaller missiles had passed the 200,000 foot altitude mark. The basic research is now complete. The lunar rocket--long talked about--is now only years distant.

Furthermore, this event is not dependent on the development of atomic power. There are propellants now in existence, such as pentolite, developed by Dr. Fritz Zwicky, California Institute of Technology professor, --or even a liquid-hydrogen liquid-oxygen mixture, which are powerful enough to enable a rocket to break free from the earth's gravity and travel into space.

We can outline quite clearly the steps which will be taken. We have mentioned the Viking rocket, which is about 45 feet long. This rocket has a single motor, and attains a speed of over a mile per second in its dash to extreme altitudes. A rocket of the same approximate length, but built in four steps or sections, each one to be discarded when its fuel supply is exhausted, could probably impart a speed of five miles per second to the fourth and final step. Fired to an altitude of 200 miles, this final section, containing recording and transmitting equipment, would take up a perpetual orbit around the earth, like a tiny moon, upon attaining the five-mile-per-second velocity. It would circle the earth in about one and one-half hours.

The data which would be telemetered back from the instruments in this permanent orbital rocket would compare with the high-altitude rocket recordings which are now being made much as a motion picture film compares with a snapshot. Data secured at present covers a period of only a few minutes. The orbital rocket would provide a continuous picture of conditions approaching those in outer space.

A few years ago, United States Army technicians established definitely that radar waves could penetrate the Heaviside layer, which reflects radio waves back to earth, and reach out to bounce off of the Moon. The practical uses of this ahcievement were not immediately apparent, but it now attains importance in connection with the next stage of progress.

This step, great as it may seem, is to send an unmanned rocket around the Moon. The mechanisms on this rocket would be partly automatic and partly actuated by radar impulses from surface stations. There would be no attempt to land on the Moon's surface, as this would serve no useful purpose.

But the information which would be brought back by such a rocket would be of extraordinary value. The data from a number of such circum-lunar rockets would have to be studied and evaluated before the next step could be taken--the construction of a space rocket to carry one or more passengers. The danger of meteors striking a space ship, the extreme temperature zones which surround the earth, possible unknown effects of cosmic radiation, the physiological results of lack of gravity and orientation, and many other factors would have to be considered before a manned space rocket could be built and launched.

It seems probable that the first spaceships will be built in the "classical" design — torpedo-shaped, with the rocket orifices at the rear and the crew's quarters in the nose of the spaceship. Such a rocket would have to be a monstrous structure, even to make the trip with a crew of only two.

The most recent design of this type was featured in an exclusive article in the Los Angeles Times for February 21, 1951. This was the conception of Arthur V. St. Germain, senior test engineer for the Fairchild Guided Missiles Division at the Navy's Point Mugu Missile Test Center.

St. Germain's design emerged as a five step missile approximately 325 feet long, with the lower four steps nesting inside each other. For fuel he

suggested a uranium or plutonium pile, which would use hydrogen as a "working fluid"—coolant as well as fuel—but lacking this, would install motors using a liquid hydrogen-oxygen combination, which is the most powerful propellant known at this time.

The final section of the rocket would be 100 feet long, and would be steered in space by small directional jets located at right angles to the axis. These jets would also be used to reverse the rocket in flight, so that it would approach the Moon stern first settling gently down against the blast of its stern motor.

The development of more powerful fuels than exist at present would assist in cutting down the take-off weight of the propellant, thus allowing for more essential weight and personnel. If it were possible, authority Pendray believes that the number of persons in the crew should be five. He suggests a pilot who will also be the navigator; a copilot who will be a mechanical engineer; a specialist in geology and mineralogy; a physicist-chemist who also is an expert on radio and radiation; and a medical authority. This group would spend nearly a month on the lunar surface, gathering data, and then would return to the earth.

Astronomers have long speculated upon the opportunities for research which would be available to them from an observatory on the Moon. With no atmosphere to disturb their "seeing," a small telescope could do the work of a much larger one on earth. The sun's corona would be visible constantly, instead of appearing only during solar eclipses as on earth. Stellar research would be immeasurably advanced by the ideal conditions available on our satellite.

While the Moon has been suggested as a possible military base for use against the earth, recent investigations, such as those by Dr. R. S. Richardson, Mt. Wilson astronomer, would seem to relegate this possibility to a rather remote position. An attacker from the Moon would stand almost as much chance of hitting his own country as he would of striking his proposed target.

Such a base on the Moon would be almost mandatory before larger rockets attempt the longer trips through space to Mars and Venus. The less fuel needed to start such rockets on their journey, means more space for necessary supplies—air, food, equipment of all kinds—in the limited area available inside a spaceship.

The problems of navigating a space vessel—first from the earth to the Moon, and later to the planets—with the associated problems of take-off, flight, and landing maneuvers and orbits, is already under serious study. The University of California at Los Angeles has for several years presented a course in rocket navigation, headed by Dr. Samuel T. Herrick.

Since there will be considerable traffic between the earth and the Moon, we can foresee the establishment of "space stations," to serve as intermediate bases for these rockets. Such a station would be assembled piece by piece out in space, with parts being brought up from the surface of the earth by cargo rockets.

If such a station were situated about 24,000 miles from the surface of the earth, it would remain permanently above a given point on the earth's surface, because its rotation around the earth would exactly match the 24-hour revolution of the earth on its axis. Such a space station could be located above every large city.

The space station would also serve as an observation post for many services on earth. Storms could be observed from their beginnings, and comprehensive weather forecasts made. The movement of icebergs in the northern seas could be followed and warnings issued to shipping. Much could be learned about the aurora and other mysterious phenomena which now perplex scientists.

The space station idea was responsible for one of the most amazing

displays of public interest in rocketry which I have ever encountered. In October, 1948, the RRS decided to use it as a feature of a public meeting. The staff artist drew up a picture of the station according to my specifications. Unfortunately, his background of earth, Moon, and space showed that while he was a marvelous designer he was no astronomer.

At any rate we made photographic copies and sent them along, with a story, to all of the local newspapers. The story related that the idea originated with Count von Pirquet and some of the other German scientists of the days of the VfR.

The meeting was scheduled for Monday night, and on Sunday evening I walked from my house to the corner to get early copies of the Monday morning papers, as we had found from earlier experience that our notices were most apt to appear in the earlier editions. Frankly, we all entertained little hope of getting much result from this particular subject, as it seemed almost too farfetched.

The newsman took the papers from under his arm, folded them and handed them to me. While he was making change I happened to glance at the pile of papers behind him. The space station picture was splashed four columns wide across the front page of the Times, along with the story.

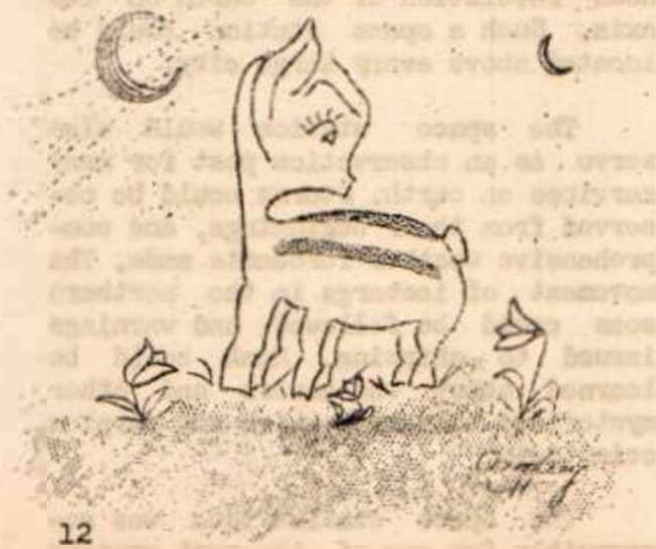
The Examiner had it, too, three columns wide on an inside page. The Times later moved it inside, but kept the big picture at the top of the story. Almost every other paper gave it similar prominence. The meeting that night was jammed.

The punch came about two months later, when the report of Defense Secretary Forrestal stated that the United States Armed Forces were seriously considering the possibilities inherent in just such a space station as we had described. It is probably one of the few times in which a civilian has beaten the military into print in this field.

The military rocket program at White Sands, New Mexico, is continually receiving offers from persons who are willing to go aloft in a V-2 rocket in the interest of science, even though they know it means disability or death. The volunteers to man a space rocket would probably run into the thousands.

So the great dream affects everyone—experimenter and layman alike. If a rocket reaches the moon before the next full-scale war breaks out, that war may be prevented. The world-wide wave of enthusiasm over this great accomplishment would turn the minds of nations and individuals to this new horizon, and the race for other worlds would be on.

Here, out in space, but attainable if we wish it, is our tomorrow—here is our new frontier.



The six-legged skunk from
Tibidee
Has more legs than are
Quite skunk its dear.
Tho his leg use's all wrong,
Still he smells pretty strong
But of pickles and pretzels
and beer.

THE SCIENCE FICTION FILM

In nineteen forty nine, George Pal announced his plan to make a motion picture out of Robert A. Heinlein's juvenile novel, ROCKET SHIP GALILEO. At the outset he hired Heinlein himself to assist with the screen play and engaged Chesley Bonestell as set designer. Irving Pichel was to direct the production for Pal.

One year and some eight hundred thousand dollars later, the efforts of these men brought forth DESTINATION MOON, which was glorious technicolor, science fiction, and a Woody Woodpecker cartoon all rolled into one film.

Before DESTINATION MOON could be released, however, another science fiction film, ROCKETSHIP XM, was rushed into production with a shooting schedule of seven days and a seventy thousand dollar budget. It was released to the public riding on the crest of a hundred thousand dollar publicity campaign put on by the makers of DESTINATION MOON.

Both films were great successes, each grossing around eight million dollars. This started the little wagon off at high speed. Studio after studio began scheduling science fiction films, producing and releasing them with such great success that today, two and one half years after Pal made his original announcement, the science fiction film, like the western, the costume drama, the detective and adventure films, has its own permanent niche in the world behind the lights. We can only guess at their future quality, however, by following their trends today.

First, let's go back and take a

look at the two films that started the trend."

We will probably see documentary films as good as DESTINATION MOON, but we will probably never see one better on space travel. However, in Pal's eagerness to have all technical facts straight, and to make it pictorially a better production, he allowed the writing and direction to slip, which resulted in a trite story line and unreal characters. In short, it was a bad case of under-direction. This is not to reflect on the director's ability, however, as we know from his past films that he can be very competent. Reluctantly I have to lay the blame at Pal's feet.

In the case of ROCKETSHIP XM, we have an instance not only of under-writing, under-direction, but also of under production and under-acting.(For the sake of simplicity, I use a broad definition of acting.) In fact, I'm quite sure that the producers of this film made more money than any other undertakers that year. One of the main reasons for the picture's success was the public's confusion of XM with DESTINATION MOON. ROCKETSHIP XM had virtually no publicity campaign of its own--nor did it need it.

Both pictures did make money, and since XM cost only about one tenth as much as DESTINATION MOON, the small "independent" houses turned to the cheap, fast quickies, turning out in rapid succession such pictures as FLIGHT TO MARS, UNKNOWN WORLD, LOST CONTINENT, and so on.

Much to the disappointment of these companies, their films made money, but nowhere near the amount that XM had made. This development won't discourage the small concerns from making quickies, though; it will just mean that they will stop releasing these "B"-budget films to the public as "A"-budget productions, and will run them in the future as second billings, like their very similar companion, the "B"-western. This, in turn will enable the general public to distinguish between the two types of science fiction films and they will turn to the big publicity pictures, such as THE THING, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, and WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE.

After Pal's film had made its appointed rounds and its financial success, Howard Hawks of RKO announced that he would film John W. Campbell's WHO GOES THERE? Charles Lederer and Ben Hecht were to do the screenplay, and what finally emerged from only four lines of WHO GOES THERE? was THE THING.

This "--THING" turned out to be one of the best illustrations of good direction, writing, production and hogwash melodramatic entertainment which I've seen in a long time. The film actually was an offense to science and science fiction. Time after time there were references to scientists as "children" bringing in their "laboratory playthings." These "children" who developed things like electricity, Boulder Dam, penicillin, the two hundred inch glass at Palomar, the steam engine, motor cars, and movie projectors helped raise us from caves to civilization. The military men (our protagonist in THE THING) has been misusing the inventions of the scientist for purposes of greed and violence ever since the first scientist-caveman invented the bow-and-arrow (probably for hunting). Granted, there is a thing called "supply and demand;" the war effort demands that the scientist supply it with certain results because of the social pressure under which they live. Agreed, the only way to end war is to end greed; this includes the greed of a motion picture studio which follows the anti-scientist trend so as to collect more money from their film. End the greed between countries and you end their wars. End their wars and atomic energy will turn to peaceful use. I realize that this is like saying, build a vacuum between here and space a hundred fifty miles up and you'll have a hole in the sky, but unbiased motion pictures will help create this hole. Either the films must be unbiased or censorship must go so that everybody can have an equal say, whether it be on sex, sadism, communism, fascism, socialism, or the right for a man to get up and just do

nothing but swear. Or as LASFS Director Frank Quattrocchi put it, "Every street must be a two way street."

Now, let's take a look at the best science fiction film since THINGS TO COME. I am speaking, of course, of THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL. Outside of one little technical flaw (the electrical "neutralization" of all mechanisms by our man from another world, Klaatu), I could find nothing wrong with the picture. The suspense was beautifully built (as it was in THE THING), and the action well-motivated. The acting was realistically done, especially on the part of the boy and the portrayal of Klaatu by Michael Rennie. And for once, the scientist (obviously a filmic Einstein) was treated as though he were an intelligent human being. The robot and flying saucer angles also were well handled. Altogether, this was a beautiful science fiction film and the kind I would like to see brought out more often by 20th Century Fox, the producers of TDTESS. Probably they will, for this company is in the habit of putting out such neat little dramas.

Last and certainly least in the "A"-budget science fiction film collection, we have WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE. Again, Pal overemphasized the production and sloughed the rest of the film. The producing job in this case, however, wasn't even as good as that of DESTINATION MOON, though still a very good job. And, although the story line is just as trite and poorly done, it is far better than Pal's initial s-f attempt, as well as the general run of story lines that come out of Paramount. Certainly Pal has learned a lot from these two films and if he takes it upon himself to get a good director, his next picture, H. G. Wells' THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, could turn out to be a fine film.

As to what the future quality of science fiction films might be, I can only say that they will probably get better in writing and directing (I'm speaking of the "A"-budget film, of course), but probably won't get much better in science until more producers come into the field who know a little science or, like Pal, can hire one who does. Despite the efforts of studios like Paramount, Monogram and other equally unreliable houses, the overall quality of science fiction films will continue to improve, unless it falls into a rut completely. I don't think this will happen, even though most science fiction films in the future will continue on the sensational side. This will eventually be toned down as the public gets tired of that type of sensationalism.

Also, we are going to have more producers like Pal coming into the field who will be sincerely interested in making a good picture. Although a lot of them may not quite have the ability to make such a movie, many of them will and so it will be a good influence on those who just want to make money.

We'll have to wait and see.

.....and here is a review of that film which O'Keefe recalls with such satisfaction. Originally intended for presentation at a LASFS meeting the week of the film's release, it was never delivered. —ed.

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL directed by Robert Wise, starring Michael Rennie, Patricia Neal, and Sam Jaffe. A 20th Century Fox Production.

As the first major studio science fiction film production since DESTINATION MOON, and based ostensibly on Harry Bates' immortal story, Farewell to the Master, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL has aroused intense feelings among science fictionists everywhere—feelings ranging from fear of what the

producers might do to Bates' story to the apparent delight with which its initial showing at the Nolacon was greeted.

It is, with certain limitations, a very good science fiction film, but it is not the best ever. That distinction is still reserved for a certain film which one prominent fan claims to have viewed some twenty five or thirty times. A film from which it borrows much in style, incidentally. Neither is it Farewell to the Master.

Stripped of treatment, the story is simple: a spaceship lands on earth, bearing a creature very like a man, and his robot. The other-world creature, Klaatu as in the original story, bears a message and a warning to mankind, which he insists on presenting only to the assembled leaders of all the nations of earth, an arrangement which cannot be completed. Imprisoned, he escapes and disappears in the city of Washington, to study the people of the earth. Here he is eventually ferretted out.....the ending must remain for you to see.

There are some very fine things in this film. The opening sequence, concerned with the arrival of the spaceship on earth, I think must be one of the very best montage sequences ever filmed. First we see the radar men tracking this strange object circling the earth at 4000 miles an hour, then we hear and see the wondering news commentators in their own especial styles—Elmer Davis, Kaltenborn and Pearson—telling the world of this unknown visitor. Kaltenborn remarks that nothing seems amiss in Washington and that it is "very like any other spring day in Washington"—followed by scenes, cut with an increasing tempo, of people gathered in the parks and on the steps of public buildings, hearing the distant, growing roar of the approaching spaceship, their mounting curiosity, the pointing fingers, the faces, the sight of the glowing object in the sky, and the sudden hysteria as the people scatter in terror.....and the man running through the traffic-jammed streets, shouting, "It's landed .....it's landed.....they're here."

Then the moving of the military equipment, and the scintillating shot of the turn in the roadway as the tanks, whipping round, skid viciously to the left before hurrying on, one after the other.....by this time you are hanging onto your seat.

The rest of the film never quite measures up to this remarkable and startlingly believable treatment of human reaction to an extra-terrestrial visitor. The story kind of gets in the way. There are, however, several other fine moments, such as the sequence in which Klaatu, masquerading as an earthman, gently breaks into the home of the eminent mathematician and corrects the equation, the result of weeks of work, which the scientist has in progress on a huge blackboard. Also there is an instant of unique emotional impact when Klaatu and the youngster whom he has befriended stand, in Arlington Cemetery, before the grave of the boy's father, and in that moment without a word of dialogue the whole intellectual content, as it were of the picture is delicately revealed.

The essential weakness of the picture is the failure of the producers to avoid that very commonest of pitfalls—to trap the superman with the mistakes that ordinary men would make. Patently, Klaatu should not have been caught. He was too smart for that; the producers weren't. More specifically, the refusal of the producers to carry their idea to its ultimate logical development is revealed in the gagging moment when, returned from death by his robot, Klaatu tells the girl it is only temporary, since only the Almighty can have the power of life. Structurally speaking, the picture just misses because it has no real climax—that is to say, there is no single cumulative moment to equal the promise which has gone before.

The film is distinguished by a notable lack of ham, by a very fine musical score (cleverly used on occasion to half-mute the alien words of Klaatu and thus reduce any possibility of seeming ridiculousness) by William Hermann, first-rate photogra-

ply by Leo Tover, and an exceptionally restrained and convincing performance by Michael Rennie as Klaatu.

The fact that an out-and-out science fiction film can be criticized on these grounds, and not, for the first time, I think, with the possible exception of Menzies' THINGS TO COME, strictly on science fictional terms, is a significant sign. With films like this, science fiction will become part and parcel of the movie world, thoroughly accepted by the industry. Then we'll get more of them, standing on their own two feet as science fiction.

--Ed M. Clinton, Jr.

Dear Devil:

I've often wanted to ask you, Devil, if what I've heard is on the level. Is there really a monstrous hell and is there still a heaven as well? Do you come when people call, or aren't you really there at all? Is it just a devilish tale, to scare us little kids to hell, or do they really mean what they say? Tell me, Devil, do they?

Do you have imps and goblins, too? and djinns and gnomes and, say, do you eat little kids for your dessert, and are you really stern and curt? I can't believe you'd be so bad, I bet you're really like my dad; they say that you're the fellow who invented things for kids to do--like going swimming when we shouldn't. If you're the one I know you couldn't be quite as bad as they've got you painted, why, they act just as if you're tainted!

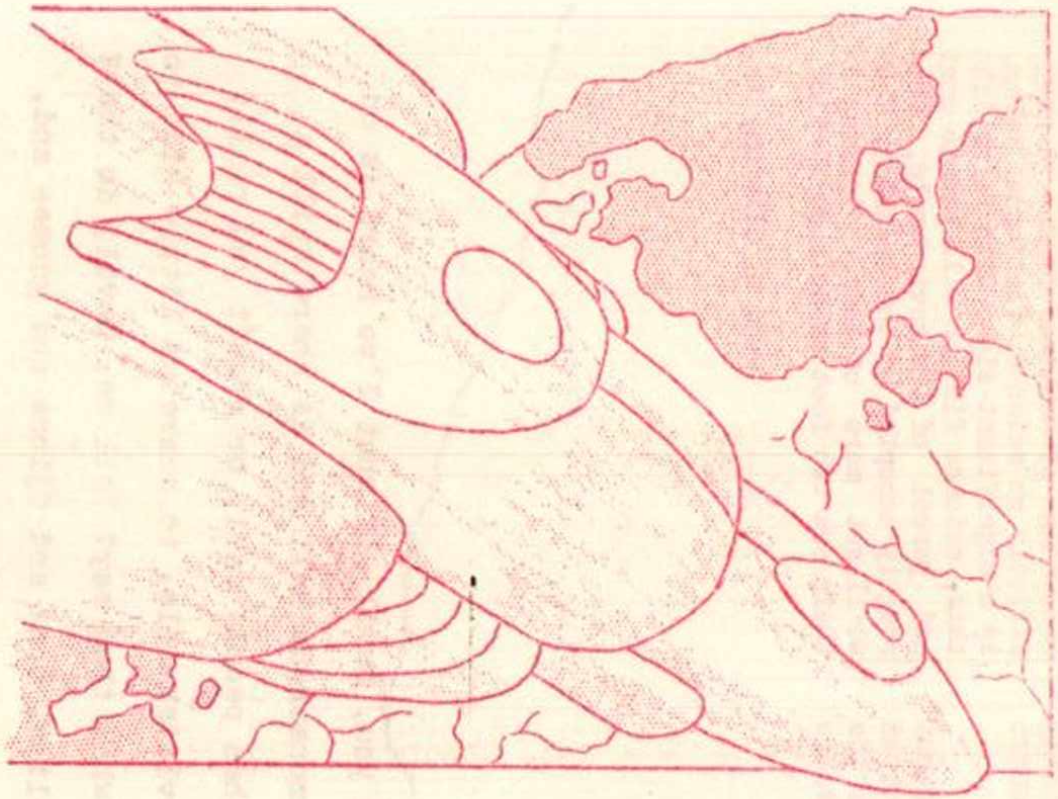
Dear Devil, I won't keep you here, there's just one thing that I'd like clear. When I have to choose and go, I hope I'll see you down below.

Yours truly,

BUTCH

PEACE

L. Major Reynolds



The ship winked into being well beyond the orbit of the outermost planet, and the Captain looked the situation over with a critical eye.

"Very good navigation, Sergeant," he said drily, "but from the looks of that sun down there, it's about as hopeless as the others we've found. A yellow dwarf doesn't produce radio-actives in the concentration we need."

"Shall I set the co-ordinates for the next sector, Sir?"

"No. As long as we're here, we might as well take a look and see what is to be found. There might be something we can use."

A search of the outermost worlds revealed nothing but barren spheres, so cold that a landing was impossible. As they drove deeper into the system, the Private, who had all three eyes glued to a port, suddenly let out a yell.

"Hey, Captain!....Sir!" he added belatedly. "There's a world over here with a ring around it!"

The Lieutenant swung the analyzer around and focussed it on the strange planet. He checked the results carefully for a moment, then:

"We're a few million years too late here, Sir. There are traces of activity in the ring, but only traces. It must have been a moon larger than the one that is left. Evidently it blew up from some cause and formed a ring on the same plane."

There was silence for a time as they watched the next planet swell beneath them. The tension broke suddenly in a gasp from the Captain.

"But the size of the thing! Who would expect to find a planet like that in this system?" He turned to the Lieutenant. "Can you compute the ratio to this one, and the one with the ring?" he asked.

"Using our own world as a base," the Lieutenant said slowly, "the ring planet figures 95.0, and that monstrosity down there is 317.0. It doesn't seem possible, but that's the reading---and the atmosphere is so different, it might be a world that was captured by this sun."

"What about radio-actives? Does it have any?"

"There's plenty of them down there, but we wouldn't be able to land. That gravity would hold us down even if we used every erg of power we have. As a matter of fact.... Sergeant, alter our course to miss that world by a larger margin."

"Private!" the Sergeant snapped, "set the plane indicator out seven degrees!"

"You're closer to it than I am, Sarg." The Private didn't bother to take his eyes away from the port.

The ship gave a tiny lurch as the Sergeant snapped the controls to the required position, and the world beneath them spun away with dizzying speed.

A zone of fragments was passed by almost unnoticed, and a small red planet almost out of range was given only a cursory glance.

"The ones I'm interested in," the Lieutenant said, "are those two cloud-covered worlds next in line. The first of them seems about the same size as our home planet." He set the analyzer on

the nearer of the two as he spoke, and watched the pointer in amazement.

"There," he exclaimed, "is what we've been looking for! That world must be a hell of radioactives under those clouds! Better close the shields, Sir, or we'll be cooked alive!"

As the Captain touched a button, there was a faint rumbling which permeated the entire craft, and the white clearness of the ports became a greenish yellow.

"All secure, Lieutenant. Sergeant, are you ready for landing?"

"Ready, Captain."

The ship floated down through the dense clouds which obscured the surface, and four sets of unbelieving eyes watched the thermostat which was set on the outside. It didn't creep, it raced up and up into the hundreds of degrees. The heat was almost visible.

Slowly the outline of the planet took shape.

"By the nine green gods of space!" the Captain said slowly, "I've seen a lot of worlds in my travels, but this tops any of them! This is the first one I've ever heard of that could never have any form of life!"

"Better watch the terrain, Captain," the Sergeant broke in. "We're heading straight for what looks like a lake of fire!"

A hurried correction of the controls set the ship down beside a fuming, seething mass, and the Lieutenant yelped with joy as he focussed the analyzer on it.

"This will take care of everything, Sir. Of course," thoughtfully, "it's a little different than the sample we have, but only I think because it's stronger. But the scientists can build their bomb now!"

"And that," the Sergeant observed wryly, "will mean the end of wars on our world?"

"That is our hope, Sergeant." The Captain's face clouded for a second. "The scientists claim that a weapon as terrible as an atomic bomb would outlaw war forever. They think the mere threat of it would be enough."

"In that case, Sir," the Lieutenant said quietly, "would they use it?"

"Human nature being what it is," the Captain crisped, "they'll use it, if only to show the others how clever they are."

"Captain, Sir," the Private interrupted, "may I take one of the shielded lifeboats and do some exploring?"

"Come on and get busy, Private," the Sergeant spoke up. "There's plenty for you to do here!"

"Never mind, Sergeant," the Captain said with a smile. "Let him go. The Lieutenant will take over, as he's the only one of us who knows what to do. We're excess baggage now."

In the hours that followed, the remote-controlled machinery outside the ship was furiously active, and the contents of the shielded tank in the stern of the ship increased rapidly. The Lieutenant finally shut off the power and allowed the entire set-up of contaminated metal to drop into the fuming pit.

"That does it, Sir. The tank is full, and the machinery jettisoned. I still can't comprehend though, how there could be such a concentration of atomics—" He broke off and gnawed his lip in puzzlement. "I realize it sounds insane to say such a thing, but it looks like synthetic radioactives! I know it's impossible on a world with the sort of sun this system has, but—" He stopped and gazed steadily out of the port at the smoking surface.

"Well, Lieutenant," the Captain soothed, "you've done your job, and that's what we came here for."

The Sergeant broke in: "Here comes the Private, and he's sure making speed! If you'll put out the decontamination net, Sir, I'll open the port."

The Private was talking as he came from the lock, talking so fast his words almost ran together.

"Captain.....there used to be people living on this world! I spotted a place where four big faces was carved out of a rock on a mountain! They looked a lot like us, only they had two eyes! At least it looked that way...."

The Captain stopped the outburst with an upraised hand. "I imagine, Private," he said with a half smile, "that you could find many weird things carved from the rocks of this world. If you wish, the Lieutenant would be glad to tell you of many strange things caused by radioactivity."

"Sir, Captain, something must've happened here! I saw—" He broke off as he saw the frowning face of his superior, turned away, and plastered himself to the port glass again.

He was still standing there, looking out into the flaming dusk which covered the surface, when the ship rose steadily with its precious freight. The freight that would bring to fulfillment man's greatest dreams. The freight that meant everlasting peace.

The ship bored out into space, and just before the hyperdrive went into action, the Private, still staring back at the tiny spot of white light, gave a long sigh, and shook his head.

"I sure wish I knew what happened down there," he said.

POEMS

The music stills, the wine is drained and gone.
Someone turns out the light.
We cling together, waiting for the dawn,
Not knowing we are lonely in the night.
....Mari Wolf

CLINICAL REPORT - EARTH

The third one out, the fairest of them all
That rolled in orbit round the golden sun -
No wonder Yahveh glowed with proper pride
The day his work was done!

Snow on the upthrust peaks, wind in the trees,
Cloud shadows on the fertile green fields flung -
Oh, all was new and fair and clean and good
When Earth was very young!

Now aging Earth rolls round the aging sun
To follow blindly some mad, monstrous plan;
Ravaged and battered, wasted by disease,
And this disease is - Man!
....Rory Faulkner

AFTERMATH

"The Earth is up,"
cried the little girl,
Pressing her nose against the glass door.

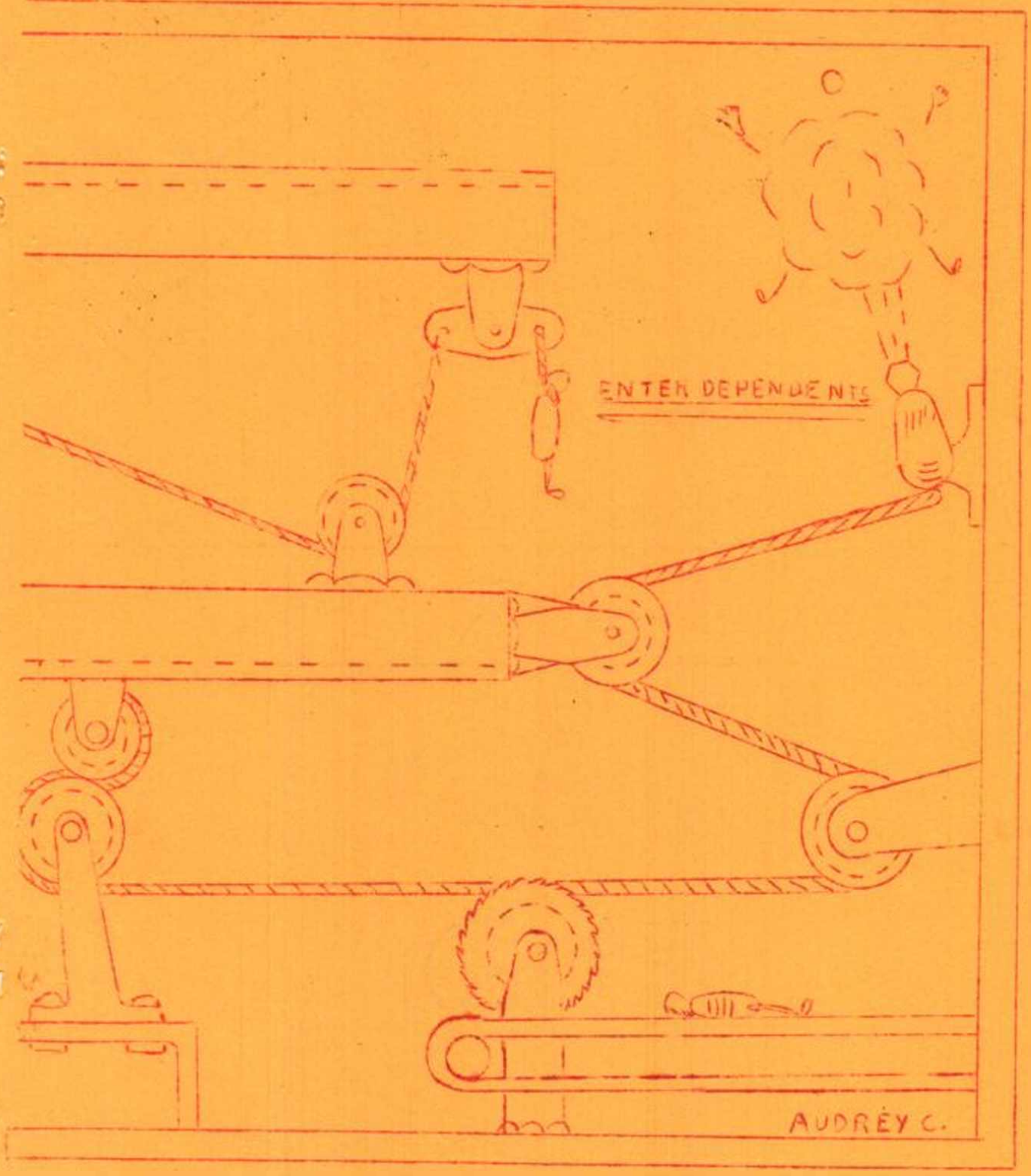
"The Earth is up,"
whispered the mother,
With tears in her eyes.

"The Earth is up,"
said the old man.
"Did I ever tell you about the time
that I used to go fishing out on....."

"What makes the Earth shine so?"
asked the little girl.
"It's not really the Earth that shines,"
explained the scientist,
"But the sun shining through it."
....Bill Cox

The LIGHTER SIDE is done, my friends;
I leave,-with love and kisses.
Time to turn to the sober side.....
My God! What a magazine this is!
.....Audrey

SHANGRI-LA



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FORRY ACKERMAN

Lou Pederson

RUSS HODGKINS

A CHECKLIST FOR FAN CRITICS

In its original form (WRITER'S MARKETS AND METHODS) this checklist was intended as an outline system for use by writers in checking their material. Slightly reworded, it becomes an excellent checklist for the criticism of any story—here slanted to apply especially to science fantasy.

INTRODUCTION

(a) Has the leading character been introduced in the first two or three paragraphs?
(b) Is he doing or saying something that will immediately arouse your curiousity or interest?
(c) Is it made clear where the character is?
(d) Does he do or say anything that indicates the kind of person he is?

PROBLEM

(a) Is it made clear what the leading character-Protagonist—wants to be....or do....or have? His desire?
(b) Has it been shown who or what is obstructing the attainment of the Protagonist's desire?
(c) Are the Protagonist's desire and the Antagonist's opposition—or the Antagonistic Force—reasonable from their different points of view? Or, if the story is basically one of conflict of concepts, are the elements of the opposing concepts so presented?

CHARACTERIZATION

(a) Has the Protagonist—or the main concept—been shown as one whom the reader would like to see win?
(b) Has the Antagonist—or the Antagonistic Force—or concept—been shown as one which the reader would like to see defeated?
(c) Are all the characters made real by the little human things they say or do....good or bad....wise or foolish....according to their individual traits?

(d) Are the speech and action of the characters consistent throughout the story?

MOTIVATION

(a) Have sound, logical reasons been provided for every bit of important action, good or bad, in the story?

CONFLICT

(a) Does the desire of the Protagonist or the development of the main concept result in actual conflict (physical, mental, social, financial, etc.) with both sides doing something about it?
(b) Is the conflict well balanced, with the advantage going first to one and then the other until the better man-or stronger force -wins?

SUSPENCE

(a) Has there been planted in the mind of the reader the possibility of the wrong man-or force-winning?
(b) Has the outcome of the conflict been witheld up to the very last minute?

ACTION

(a) Have the characters been shown doing the things they would naturally do in view of the situation and the kind of people they are?
(b) Is the action interesting in itself?
(c) Does it move the plot forward?
(d) Has it been given a tempo-speed-in keeping with the situation?

DIALOGUE

(a) Are you satisfied the characters would actually talk the way they do?
(b) Have clipped and slurred and abbreviated words been used (in moderation) for the characters to make dialogue more colloquial —when colloquialisms are called for?
(c) Have the characters been shown using terms peculiar to their nationality, the special conditions of the story (place in time, etc.) or any particular interests they might have?

EMOTION

(a) Did you feel stirred by any emotion while reading the story?

DENOUEMENT

(a) Does the end of the story give a really satisfactory solution to the problem set for the Protagonist, or a plausible reason for the success or failure of the main concept?
(b) Does the Protagonist bring about the solution through his own efforts?
(c) Is there a feeling of finality about the ending?

PLAUSIBILITY

(a) Is the story—as a whole—about something which the reader could accept as possible—plausible, consistent within itself?
(b) Are the individual situations, scenes, and bits of action believable, consistent with the setting of the story or the concepts employed?

SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE

(a) Has effective use been made of the setting in which the action takes place?
(b) Has adequate use been made of weather—time of day—color and sound——special circumstances called for by the story premise-in achieving certain effects?

THEME

If the story is basically conceptual or thematic, does the author;—
(a) Satisfactorily demonstrate the truth or falsity of the theme or concept; or
(b) Satisfactorily demonstrate the plausibility of his extrapolation?

"He.....ah.....he craves special transportation," said the man in the long white robe. He had a bright halo around his head.

The Great Bearded One leaned forward and frowned. "Special transportation?"

"Yes, Sire, special transportation. I realize this is an unusual request, but he seems so sincere about it--"

"Mph." The Great Bearded One fell back in his golden chair and ran his fingers through his beard. "Mph. Unusual indeed. Does he give any reason for his request?"

The lesser one, who was a doorkeeper, looked at his sandalled shoes. "Yes, Sire."

"Well? Well?"

"He was a science fiction--writer."

"A what?"

"Science fiction writer." Sheepishly the doorkeeper adjusted his white robe.

"And what, pray tell, is a science fiction writer?"

The doorkeeper shrugged eloquently. "I don't got it myself, Sire. Something about the future. He keeps saying that he wrote all about that thing, that....ah....that atomic bomb before they had invented it, Down There."

"Oh. That. Yes, I've heard something about it, but full reports on it haven't come down yet from Up Above. Remind me, by the way, to send a messenger requesting information as to how I'm to deal with those who had something to do with the..uh..Atomic Bomb. But--about this science fiction writer. What kind of special transportation does he want?"

The doorkeeper scratched his head. "Sire, I'm sure I don't understand what it is he wants. He calls it a spaceship."

"Spaceship? Spaceship?"

"Yes, Sire. He wants to go by spaceship."

The Great Bearded One say silently for a moment, stroking his beard. "How full is the docket this morning, doorkeeper?"

"Not many. His is the only special plea. Would you like to talk to him personally?"

"I was just wondering." There was a perplexed expression on his face. "Once before there was a fellow came through here, name of Verne, I believe, who asked for the same thing. Can't remember whether we took care of him or not." He shrugged. "Oh, send him in. I'm curious."

"Yes, Sire." The doorkeeper bowed low and backed away, and then disappeared into the wall of flickering lights. In a moment a great, sonorous boom sounded, the flickering lights parted, and he of the request for spo-

TO HEAVEN

cial transportation stepped into the Great Bearded One's chamber.

He was a little man in a worn, conservative business suit, and he held his hat in his hands. After he had passed through the opening in the wall of light, he hesitated, and watched uncomfortably as the lights coalesced and the entrance disappeared.

"Come forward, Mortal."

The Mortal looked around the great chamber, his eyes wide with wonder, and slowly shuffled forward. Nervously he ran his fingers around the brim of his hat, and flashed a sheepish smile at the Great Bearded One as he reached the foot of the golden chair.

"So you crave special transportation?"

The Mortal half turned and made a feeble motion in the direction of the wall of light. "That's what....the.... the follow with the light"—he waved his hand in a circle around his head—"called it, yes, sir."

"You know, of course, that we don't ordinarily grant such special requests."

The Mortal nodded. "That's what he told me."

The Bearded One leaned forward and folded his fat hands on his knees. "The doorkeeper said you were a...."

"Science fiction writer. You know—the future, and stuff. Ray guns and invisibility suits and time machines and atomic bombs. Only that isn't the future any more."

"Hum. You mean you wrote about things like that?"

"Yessir!"

"Impossible things like that? And they paid you for it?"

The little man drew himself up indignantly. "Sir, you are only displaying a typical narrowmindedness and ignorance of how little we know—Oops! I forgot." His voice trailed away and he backed up a few steps.

The Bearded One waved a hand in dismissal. "Forget it. Now—this space ship in which you want to go Up Above—did you write about that too?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, many times. Especially one novel. I used a new gimmick to get my character to Pluto—but you wouldn't care about that."

The Bearded One hardly seemed to hear. "Then a spaceship, I take it, is a vehicle for transportation between the planets?"

"Now you've got it!" The Mortal beamed happily. "Can I? I mean, I don't want to seem presumptuous or anything, but...."

The Bearded One raised a pudgy hand. "Wait. You must have a good reason before we can even consider your request."

The little man seemed crushed. "I suppose my reasons aren't particularly good—"

"Seems they should be mighty good strong reasons. Why in the name of.... that is, why isn't our standard, everyday, perfectly comfortable, efficient escalator satisfactory? Why must you have such an outlandish gadget as a spaceship for the trip?"

The Mortal sighed, so deeply the Great Bearded One himself, who of late had felt only such emotions as boredom and exasperation, almost felt the little man's misery. "Well, you see, I died awfully young. Only thirty."

"Obviously," nodded the Bearded One.

"For ten years I had been writing science fiction. Followed it for ten years before that, and always dreamed of the day when that first spaceship would take off from earth. And even more, I dreamed of some day travelling on one myself.

"At first it didn't seem like I'd live to see that day. But gradually it seemed more and more possible. Then came the war, and I got through that, and when I came out and started writing again, so many things had come to pass that it looked like we might hit the moon by maybe 1960. It was a wonderful thought! And then—this." He looked down at himself. "I got killed in an accident. Now I'll never get to take that ride on a spaceship. Never. Not unless—" He looked up. "Not unless you fix it up for me."

"Hmmm." The Bearded One lifted his foot and brought it thumping down. Instantly the doorkeeper dashed through the wall of light. He was wiping perspiration from his brow.

"Business is picking up. I think there's another war Down There. Millions of 'em— Oh, yes, Sire. What did you wish?"

The Bearded One Pointed at the science fiction writer. "Take him into the anteroom. Have him wait, and hold off the others until I tell you to let them through."

The doorkeeper closed his eyes wearily. "Yes, sire. I'll-do my best." He motioned to the science fiction writer to follow him. "This way, Mortal."

The Great Bearded One shouted after them. "I'm taking this under consideration, Mortal. See what I can do for you."

The Mortal turned to say thanks, but before he knew it he was inside a little room with walls of pink light. There was one chair, very soft and comfortable, into which he sank. In a little while he was asleep.

Elsewhere in the Receiving Department The Great Bearded One was having a conference with his advisors.

"No," said the Registrar of Special Privileges, "I don't recall it offhand. Verne, Verne..hmmm. You don't remember his first name, sire?"

The Bearded One shook his head and drummed his fingers on the arm of his golden chair. "Seems to me we couldn't take care of his request, though." He shook his head.

The registrar flipped through his files once again, and shrugged helplessly. "No Vernes at all. Guess we didn't."

The Great Bearded One sighed, and his whole body rippled. "Very well. Doorkeep! Send in that confounded Mortal. The rest of you, leave."

Bowing low, they retreated. The doorkeeper sought out the sleeping science-fiction writer and brought him back into the Bearded One's chamber.

"Mortal," said the Bearded One, "you have me. I honestly would like to grant you your special request; you sound very sincere. But I am sorry. We have nothing to go on—no records, nothing. There are no spaceships in the Special Properties Department, and no research on the matter was ever done.

This Verne fellow I tried to recall—"

"Jules Verne?" The little man's eyes lit.

"That's it! Jules! Couldn't remember it. At any rate, I'm positive he requested the same thing, but the records indicate that we apparently couldn't handle it. So—I'm sorry."

The Mortal looked down and crushed his hat in his hands. "Okay. Thanks. Thanks, anyway. I appreciate your attempt." He started to walk away, then stopped, turned, and said hopefully: "Suppose you make some improvements later on and install a spaceship service to replace the escalator. Could I arrange for a ride?"

The Bearded One shook his head sadly. "No, I'm sorry."

"Oh. Well—you don't suppose there might be one Up Above...."

Again the Bearded One shook his head. "No mechanical contrivances used up there. All will-power."

"Okay. Okay. Just thought I'd ask." He made a feeble motion with his hat. "Which....way to the escalator?"

"I'll call the doorkeeper— Wait just a moment! You've given me an idea. Come here, Mortal. Closer."

"Y-yes, sir?"

"Mortal, you say that Down There they pretty nearly have this.....this spaceship developed?"

"We-ell." The Mortal was quite thoughtful for a moment. "Pretty near. A few more years at the most."

"Mmmm." The Bearded One cupped his face in his hand. "Mmm. Tell you what. I'll make you a proposition. This place around here could stand some improvements. We have some good research men, understand, but they're ...well, this is a pretty reactionary place, you know. They sit around most of the time bragging about what they have accomplished. Like that escalator; you ought to see it, it really is quite wonderful. But they're not very progressive. So I'll tell you what. I'm going to send you back to earth—"

"But-but-but I'm deaf!"

The Bearded One frowned. "That's of no consequence, really, now, is it? A mere detail. But as I was saying. I'll send you back. You get together all the research and information on this.....this gadget that you can and bring it back. I'll give it to our research staff, and they'll look it over. If they think something can be done with it, I think we can take care of you."

The little man gulped. "But how? I mean, will I be a ghost? Or....or what?"

"Ghost?" The Bearded One began to laugh, and he laughed so hard and so long the Mortal thought the blood vessels in his face were going to pop. "Oh, my, no! Such impossibilities you science - fiction writers think up. It's much simpler than that —no body, no form. We just send you —the real you—down. You take over anybody's mind you want to—scientists, anybody."

"Oh, yeah." The science - fiction writer grinned gleefully. "I wrote a story on that idea once. Whaddaya know!"

The Bearded One wrote out a note on a piece of glowing silver paper, in ink of gold. "Here. Give this to the doorkeeper, and he'll fix you up. But, mind you, you have only one week Mortal time reckoning, to do this. We can't stall everything for longer than that, and you have to go Up Above in order, you know. I'm only doing this, going to all this trouble, I mean, because I think something important might come of it."

The Mortal backed off, grinning happily.

A week later he was back.

"And?" said the Bearded One pompously.

The little man thrust a huge sheaf of papers to him. "I got it, sir. All the dope. Everything anybody Down There knows about space ships." He beamed proudly.

The Great Bearded One took the sheaf and waved the little man away. "Drop back again this afternoon. If it can be done, we'll have the spaceship ready then."

The research men discussed the data, argued the problem, decided it could be done. They went to the Bearded One.

"It can be done, sire, but—"

"But what?"

"But why, sire?"

The Great Bearded One hunched forward and stroked his chin. "Impractical, eh?"

"Definitely. No point at all. The escalator is quite as sufficient for our purposes."

"Mm-hmm. Then you don't recommend—"He looked up as the doorkeeper staggered in, wiping his face. He looked very haggard and hot. "What is it, doorkeep?"

"Sire, they're getting all clogged up—millions and millions of them sire. We can't hold off much longer, and—"

"And what?"

"There's—another one."

"Another what?"

"Another one of those.....those science-fiction writers."

"Hah?"

"Yes, sire. And—he...that is.."

"Special transportation?"

The doorkeeper nodded wearily. "Yes, sire, he craves special transportation. Yes, sire, a spaceship."

The Great Bearded One fell back into his golden chair and scratched his balding head. "What's getting into these people?" He turned to the research men. "Immortals, I think it should be done. This indicates a trend."

"But, sire, it's so inefficient!"

The Bearded One thumped the arm of his chair. "This is the Place of Last Requests, let me remind you. A trend must be taken care of; it is one of the supreme dicta."

"But—"

He waved a hand. "I want a space ship. And—make it a big one." They shuffled away, and the Bearded One thumped his foot. The doorkeeper snapped to attention. "Doorkeep! Summon the Mortal that started all this trouble."

The Mortal, trembling, appeared. "What—what did they say, sir?"

At that moment there was a great rumbling and the sound of lightning crackling. The Bearded One smiled and waved his hand, and one of the walls of light disappeared. Beyond it, glittering in the light, was—

"A spaceship! Ooh!"

Gasping, his face in sheer ecstasy, the little man stumbled toward it. It was so beautiful, he thought, so beautiful in The Light; just like he had imagined—

"Mortal! Hold! Hear me out, Mortal!"

He tore his eyes from the great spaceship and faced the Bearded One on his chair of gold. "Yes, sir? Thank you, sir!"

"Listen to me, Mortal."

"Yes.....Sir."

"Do you really want to go Up Above?"

"Why...." The little man turned toward the spaceship. "In that? Oh, yes—"

"No" The Great Bearded One waved his hand. "No, you misunderstand. I mean—do you really want to live Up Above?"

"Well....I always thought that was where I was headed. I've always been a good sort of a guy, a few sins I suppose, but better than average."

"Mmm. Once up there, once Up Above——it's permanent. Except, of course, for people like me."

"Oh. Yeah. Yeah, I see."

The Bearded One leaned forward, not unkindly. "Mortal, let me tell you something. Up Above—that is a very nebulous place. To be sure, any who wish—and who deserve, of course--may go there. But heaven is a thing unto each man himself—do you realize that?"

"I think I know what you mean." His eyes were wide.

"Each man creates his own heaven even as each man creates his own hell —and each is in turn consigned to that thing of his own creation. It cannot be otherwise. Do you understand?

"Yes." He was fingering his hat again. "Yes, but what does that have to do with me?"

"Surely, Mortal, you have created a greater heaven than the common flock."

"Huh? I mean, pardon, sir?"

"The spaceship. You are not the only science fiction writer."

Suddenly the little man's eyes grew wide. "You mean--forever?"

"Forever."

DIRECTIONS FOR NEWCOMERS

All but science fictionists:

TAKE THE ESCALATOR

Science Fictionists:

THIS WAY TO VALHALLA

Via Spaceship

****

THE BRASH MONKEY, a review presented by the Yale Puppeteers, book and music by Forman Brown, designed by Harry Burnett.

This latest Yale review is laid in the year 2004, in Simian City. Man, it seems, has been succeeded by another primate in his domination of the Earth.

While to some extent it may seem that the humor here is a tiny bit below the belt, I suspect a sort of down-to-earthism attitude here, for when the last man admits to the last woman that, after all, what didn't worry Adam shouldn't worry them, it's more than a cute joke.

The trouble, it seems, was that man kept monkeying around too much, and so it is essential that the new simian masters of the world do not fall into the same trap by humaning around too much. Otherwise, if we believe our hairy hero, they are liable to end up in a zoo—

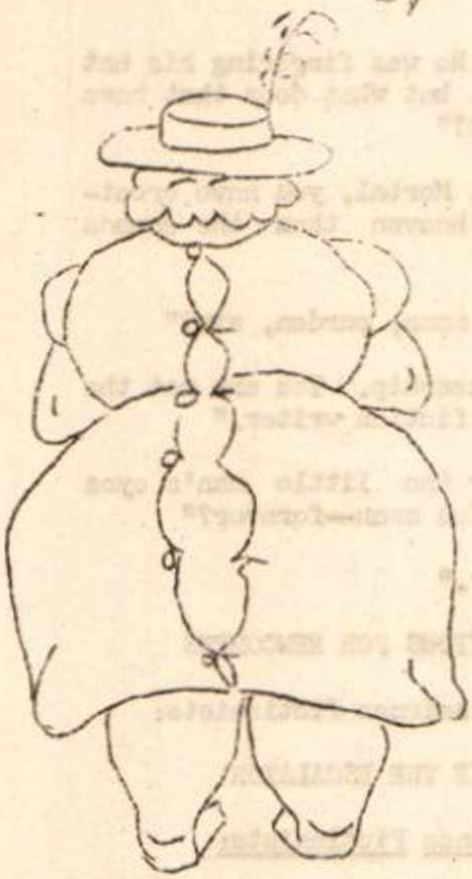
Particularly wonderful is the eight-armed octopus receptionist in Scene 2, the dance of the hippopotami in the opening scene, and several lines in the Prologue sequence, which is the graduation address at Gargantua University. The name just couldn't accidentally have that double meaning!

Delightful is the only word for this unusual show, which is one of several currently rotating reviews in Turnabout's puppet theatre repertoire.

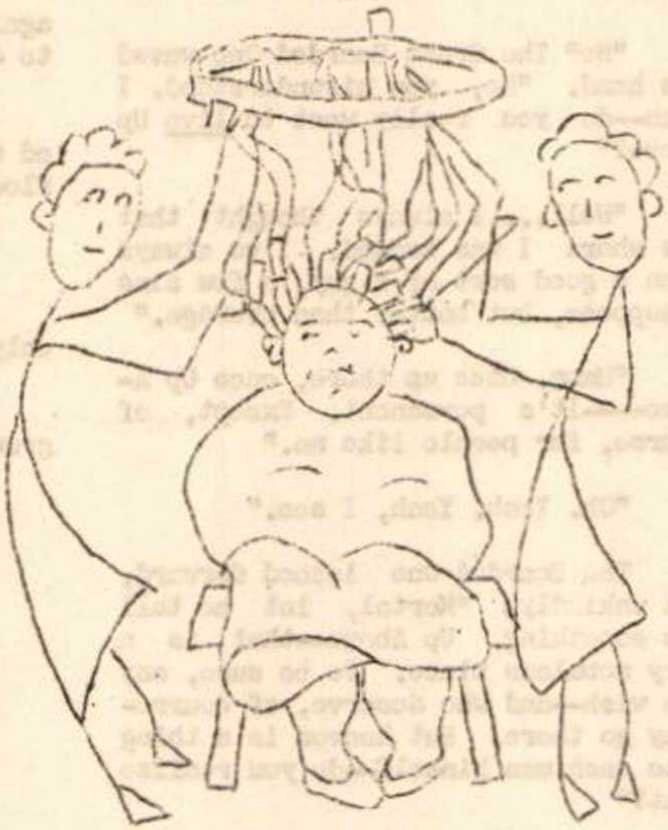
—Ed M. Clinton, Jr.

ILLUSTRATED SCIENCE DICTIONARY

by D.M.F.



Critical Mass



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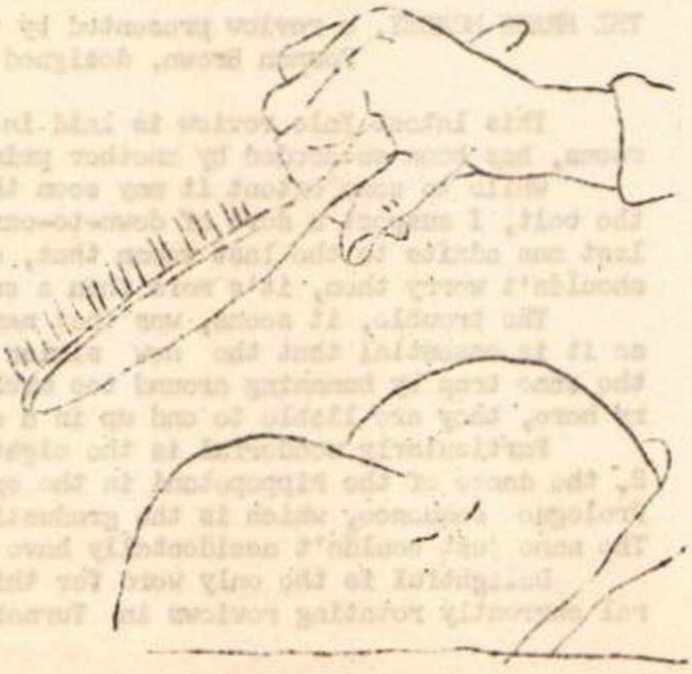

Obsolete Weapon